A

NARRATIVE

Of the

PROCEEDINGS

Of the

FLEET:

Giving an Account of what hath paſſed ſince their Arrivall at *Graves End*, between divers Honorable Members of *Parliament* and Vice-Admiral *Lawſon*, and [the Commiſſioners ſent from *White-Hall* appointed to Treat on the behalf of the Army.

Sent in a Letter of the 22. Inſtant, from the FLEET Riding at Anchor at *Graves-End*.

LONDON.

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A LETTER of the 22. of *December*, 1659, from the *Fleet*, Riding at an Anchor at *Graves-End*, giving an Account of what hath passed there since the 17th present.

SIR,

ON Saturday morning 17 Instant at ten of the clock, Mr. *Scot*, Col. *Okey*, and Mr. *John Streater*, Comptroller of the Ordnance, arrived on Board the *Bristol*, Captain *Deakins* being Commander of the Ships Riding at an Anchor in *Tilbury-Hope*; half an hour after on Board the same Ship, arrived Sir *Henry Vain*, Major *Salloway*, Mr. *Courtney*, and Mr. *Thankfull Owen*: Captain *Deakins* about two of the Clock commanded the *Drake* Frigot to weigh Anchor, and set sail either to meet Vice-Admiral *Lawson*, who then was thought to ride with the Fleet in *Margaret* Rode;

or was sailing towards the *Hope*: The Gentlemen before mentioned went on Board the *Drake* Frigat; and after four hours sailing, met the Fleet: The Gentlemen went on board the *Swift* to the Vice-Admiral. Sir *Hen. Vain* endeavoured to perswade the Vice-Admirall to come to an Anchor in the place where he met him: The Vice-Admiral refused, and came to an Anchor at 8. in the Evening a little below *Graves-End*.

Nothing passed that Night worth the taking Notice of; but on the Sabbath-day the 18. Instant, about two in the Afternoon, the Vice-Admiral called a Council of War, there being present the Gentlemen before-mentioned; the three first in behalf of the Parliament; and the latter as Mediators between the Army and the Fleet; unto whose ayd came Colonel *Salmon*, and Col. *Barrow*.

The Vice-Admirall began, expressing in an excellent Discourse the Reasons and Grounds of the Fleets coming in to the River, and their declaring their Resolutions to endeavour the Restoring of the Parliament to the Exercise of their Authority, they judging them the onely means to Restore Peace and Settlement unto these distressed Nations, almost ruined with Changes, decay and losse of Trade occasioned thereby, and the like. After which, he caused the *Declaration* of the Fleet to be read, together with his Letter to the late Lieutenant Generall *Fleetwood*, and the Letter to the Lord Mayor, Court of Aldermen, and Common-Councell of *London*: After which, the Vice-Admirall gave a Narrative of Colonel *Barrow*'s Negotiations with him in the *Downes*; as also what past between him, Col. *White*, and Captain *Kingdom*, which was to this purpose, *viz.* they desired him to forbear Declaring, especially in behalf of the Parliament: Likewise, That if he should offer to come out of the *Downes*, *Charls Stuart* would Immediately Transport Men over to *England*, who had (as they alledged) Sayl at *Ostend*, which were ready.

To which the Vice-Admirall answered; As to the first, He was Resolved, with the whole Fleet, to Declare, and with their Lives and Fortunes to pursue it in all points as become Englishmen, in order to the Restoration of their Liberties. To the Second, he had Intelligence from *Ostend*, That there were no Ships ready

ready, but some small Pickeroons; and that he should leave at Dunkirk and the Coast of *Flanders* sufficient Force to attend their Motion. And moreover, he should leave 3 or 4 small Frigats in the *Downes* (as he hath) that should be enough to secure *England* from any present Danger, that any preparations that were on foot at present could threaten; as also, that he was certain *Charls Stuart* had no other Forces ready, nor could not in any reasonable time, if He had Ships. Colonel *Salmon* endeavoured to perswade the Vice-Admirals and the Council of War, to send five or six more Frigats to the Downes, but could not prevail, They were Resolved to keep Home, and rather look after the Enemy in the heart of their Country, then those in the Extream Parts: Colonel *Salmon* and Colonel *Barrow* fell both of them upon the Parliament, alleadging that they had not done any good to the Nation: To which, it was Replyed, That the Reasons were for, that the Army had always bin the Obstruction and Hinderance, by their Imposing upon the Parliament such things as not onely hindered the Good which they ought in Duty to have done to their Country, but also forced and over-awed Them to do those things that gave offence and dislike to the People in General: To which, *Barrow* and *Salmon* Replyed, That they, if they stood in the dislike of the People, it was Expedient and Rational to compose All to call a Free Parliament, or another Parliament under Qualifications, rather then that Parliament: Unto which it was Answered, That the Parliament was the onely Visible Power of the Nation, and that it is really in being by Act of Parliament; and that if they should not meet, and devolve the Supream Power over to succession of Parliaments, they must receive their Parliaments, whether Free or Limited by Qualifications, from the power of a Committee of Safety, who received their power from the Army, who have nothing to do with giving of Laws to the Nation; and, That it was the Duty of every man to oppose and hinder the carrying on of any such pernicious Designs, which tended to nothing less then the Converting the Supream Power of the Nation into the Hands of the Army: For that if they should submit to have a Free Parliament, then if they did but harp upon the String of *Charls Stuart*, they would Dissolve Them, and

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plead that Parliament would not do the Work, and that God had a mind to lay aside that Idol of the People, Parliaments, for it would fall into the Hands of a refus'd Interest, the Army; and if that the Parliament, Erected by the Authority of the Army, should not fall upon a Single Person, to Design to prevent them of their Design against Parliaments? Yea, what would they do when they shall be Over-ruled by the 21 Conservators, whose Judgment and Interest must be put into the Ballance with the Judgment and Interest of the Publick. To the last, it was Replyed by the Mediators, That the Conservators might possibly be layed aside; To which it was answered, That in the room of them, the General Council of the Army would undertake that matter: It was Replyed by the Mediators, That the Army had reason so to do, to see that what they had Fought for, should not be lost at a Breath; unto which was answered, That the Parliament were obliged in an higher Nature, than the Army, to prevent that; besides, That the Parliament could not do it, in regard that what was Fought for, was the publick Interest, and the Parliament must necessarily adhere to the publick Interest. That the Army never intended other, than to fortifie it Self against the publick Interest, by setting it Self up as a distinct Composition over the People and publick Interest; the which, was apparent by their present Practises, and therefore it was necessary that the Army should be brought under the Civil Power, above which it had Exalted it Self for several years last past. And that although they promised to sit under that which they now humbled, set Up, all the World knoweth they might pull down what they set up, notwithstanding their Promise, for the World knoweth that yet no Promise, Covenant, Engagement, or Declaration ever held Them. Therefore it is necessary to oppose Them, since They strike at All, especially, when that their present offer of a Parliament, Free, or Qualified, tendeth to nothing but to avoid the present Emergency, of what is threatened by General MONCK and Vice-Admiral LAWSON, and the other Forces of the Commonwealth, who (no doubt) with the blessing of the Almighty, will bring Them to Account for all their Horrid Perjuries, Breach of Trust, Blasting and Abusing of the Nation,

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by proceeding the securing of the Cause, the refined Interest, and the People of God, when nothing was more Destructive thereunto, then their present Proceedings, which doth overthrow and endanger all together; and destroy the Trade and Navigation, obstructing of Justice, and discomposing the Harmony of Government, to the dishonour of God, and disquiet of the Nations: Besides, there is nothing less to be expected from Them; Nay, some of Them have boasted, that so soon as this Danger is over they will bridle this Nation well enough without *Parliaments*; therefore the People are to have a care they be not taken by the snare of their specious Pretences, since it is certain, no *Parliament* can be called that knoweth better how to rid the Nation of these unquiet and dangerous Persons: Moreover, it was largely discourred and proved, that this *Parliament* ever did what they could possible (in their sitting before *Cromwell's* Interruption) to shake of the Yoke of the Army, that thereby they might arrive at the work of Setling the Nation upon the just and honourable Basis of true Freedom, such as might consist with the Preservation of Publique Interest: The like they did at their last Sitting, it is evident to the whole World, They made it appear, that they did not intend longer to lend their Authority to be a Mask to the *Armies* Tyranny: Besides, It was made appear, that when they were admitted the last time to the Exercise of their Authority, it was to no other end than to be a Shield to defend the Ring-leaders of mischief in the *Army*; For some small time, to colour their Act of turning out *Richard* and his *Parliament*, untill they should find an Occasion or an Opportunity to turn them out again, so that they might arrive at what they aimed at, *viz.* The Tyrannizing over the Nation: Nay, in their Private Cabals, there are some of them have advised rather to choose a *Free Parliament*, than a *Parliament* that shall be chosen with Qualifications, in regard they should have Opportunity administred sooner for their turning out.

There were many more particulars discourred of; but my memory, together with my time, preventeth me of giving You the particulars: But, let me assure You, they were the best that ever I heard, in so much that they concurring with the Judg-

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ment and Resolution of the honest and gallant Sea-Commanders, 4 or 5 of the dissenting Commanders that stood out at the first, were convinced, and signed the Declaration before the faces of the Mediators. Sir, There being nothing of Action at the present, I forbear to give You any further Account in regard that what they intend further is under consideration in order to Action; the which no doubt will produce another face upon things, if the *Walkingfordians* shall still persist in their Folly and Madness, against which and Them God in his providence will witness, to the deliverance of these almost destroyed Nations; in which work, it is the Duty of every English-man to assist, that Posterity may be happy under a Succession of *Parliamentary Authority*, derived from a Civil, rather than a Military Fountain, from whence floweth nothing but Absolute Pride, and unlimited, arbitrary, and Tyrannical Streams.

Sir, I do not question but You will contribute your aid in this Work, and endeavour to undeceive the Nation of the Pretence of the *Army*, in calling a *Parliament* together; with the Danger of receiving a *Parliament* from an *Army*, in which the Nation doth no less than grant the *Army* to be the Supream Authority: Besides, when it is Their Design in Calling them, for no other End than to levy Mony, to hold You and your Posterity in Slavery and Bonds not easily to be shaken off.

Sir,

Your Friend, and faithful
Servant to the Publique,

M. H.